

**Written Testimony of  
Allison Mahon**

**March 7, 2012**

**In Support of House Bill No. 5333  
Public Health Committee**

**Testimony in support of HB 5333,  
An Act Concerning Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness**

Representative Ritter, Senator Gerratana, and members of the Public Health Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of House Bill # 5333.

My name is Allison Mahon and I am writing in strong support of House Bill #5333. I am the proud sister of an organ and tissue donor, and also serve as the volunteer Chairperson for the Board of Directors of Donate Life Connecticut. I am confident that this bill can successfully increase our state's donor registry through the awareness efforts it supports, which in turn, will save the lives of patients desperately waiting for life-saving transplants.

In 2006, my 23-year old brother Bryan suffered a fatal head injury in the same motorcycle accident that instantly took the life of his girlfriend. As our family, joined by Bryan's best friends, surrounded him in the intensive care unit that day, we said goodbye to our son, brother, colleague, friend, and truly one of the most amazing men any of us had ever known. We knew, without hesitation, that his decision to be a registered donor would be changing the lives of other families that day in a way that would honor his memory forever. While we had received the news that our loved one was gone, other families were at that moment receiving the news that life was on its way. His strong, healthy heart was flown to Philadelphia that night to save the life of a man who has since been present for the birth of his first grandchild. His pancreas has allowed a man in Connecticut to live free from diabetes for the first time in over 30 years, and his healthy kidney recipient Tommy has enjoyed five extra years and counting, of life with his wife and daughter. The young woman who received Bryan's other healthy kidney not only started college two months after the transplant that saved her life, but she has also since finished her degree and is now working on her PhD.

While an estimated 80-90% of the population supports donation, only 40% of Connecticut's residents are currently registered donors; this legislation offers our state an opportunity to close this gap, a gap that results in approximately 18 patients dying each day because a life-saving organ is not available for transplant. Through sharing

best-practices and creating additional opportunities for educating members of the public on the importance of registering, this legislation has the power to save lives.

As any person who has lost a family member can confirm, time heals no wounds. I miss my brother more with each passing day. What has healed the devastating pain of our loss, is the gift of knowing that his life has continued, in the most powerful way possible, because of his decision to be a registered donor. Every resident of our state should be educated and equipped to make the decision to say 'yes' to saving lives.

Thank you,  
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